nearly seventy years of age, spoke English a little, and kindly agreed to help by acting as introducer as well as interpreter. The Chowkidar of the bungalow, a Christian Khasi who spoke Hindi tolerably well, was however our principal interpreter. Before proceeding to the village, I had studied Roberts' Khasi Grammar and also learnt simple sentences in Khasi necessary for collecting genealogies, kinship terms and connected details, and the inheritance of the ancestral house and lands. This portion of the data was collected entirely through questions and answers in Khasi; the other details were obtained with the help of myself, U Suka Rai and his friends and the Chowkidar, U Shabington. On important points however, some checking was made, by simple questions in Khasi, which involved definite answers in the affirmative or negative. My students who had accompanied me for training in field studies, repeated some of my observations, in my presence and with my help and guidance.

My best thanks are due to Mr. E. Cantlie, Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, for furnishing me with the letter of introduction to U Suka Rai and for other facilities. His published notes on Khasi law, especially the chapters on inheritance also proved to be of great value in carrying out the enquiries (I). In the subsequent portions of this article, references to the works of Gurdon and Cantlie, will be indicated merely by (G) and (C2) respectively.

[p. 1]

CHAPTER I

According to traditions preserved by the local people, the Langtieh clan were the first settlers in Mawphlang. The Lyngkhoh were invited to come and settle as the Langtieh wanted priests to perform proper worship for their village. Other clans came later and settled in the State. These old clans are known as Khadar Kur. Mystris are elected from the following four clans—Langtieh, Khar Shiang, Khar Blurei and Khar Sohlia. The above traditions of the origin of the settlement were furnished by the mystri U Sohn Bai, his sister's husband U Alimon and others. The list of Khadar Kur furnished by the mystri is noted below :—

(1) Langtieh.	(2) Lyngkhoh.	(3) Khar Shiang.
(4) Khar Blurei	(5) Khar Sohlia.	(6) Khar Phrangsng.
(7) Khar Kynsin.	(8) Khar Sohkhar.	(9) Marbaniang.
(10) Khar Nartiang.	(11) Khar Mawphlang.	(12) Khar Syntaw.

The genealogy of mystri U Sohn Bai, of mystri U Onrang Singh and others are shown at the end of this chapter. In collecting kinship terms, three questions were asked of the informant :

(i). What is the relationship of B to the informant A (and of A to B). This is shown in the tables as the kinship term.

(ii). What the informant A called B (and conversely). This is shown in the tables as the term of address.

(iii). How the informant A referred to the relationship of B to C, another relative. This is shown as the term of reference.

From the beginning of my field work, my interest lay in a comparative study of the two systems, not in preparing a complete monograph of the cultures of the two peoples. I used the period of my field research in working among the two peoples alternately, so that I could constantly check from one field to the other as new problems appeared.

The period of my field work was very limited (October, 1959–February, 1960). I did not know the vernacular of either the Garo or the Khasi (since Garo language has much commonness with Tibetan language which I was used to read and speak, I could quickly get used to follow their speech during my field work, but I failed to do so in Khasi language). I employed altogether five local English-speaking interpreters (out of the five, three were pagan, and all had relatives in the villages where I worked). But I already had experience in studying the economic and social organization of other hill peoples in Assam, having carried out two years (1953–1955) field work among tribes in Tripura State and among the Tangkhul Nagas in Manipur State, as also among Himalayan peoples. This all helped me a great deal in my work among the Garo and the Khasi, and is one of the reasons why I could collect such a considerable amount of data, in spite of the above mentioned handicaps of my actual field work. (Later on, I carried out field research for four months among the Nayar of Kerala, to provide further data for comparative study.

The Garo and the Khasi present very different structures from each other. In order to present a most effective picture of each structure, I have used different ways of presentation, each of which brings out certain important theoretical implications. The emphasis is laid accordingly upon different features in the case of the Garo, it is the marriage system in relation to the village community; in the case of the Khasi, it is variation in marriage forms related to the structure of descent groups.

I wish to express my profound gratitude, first of all, to the Ella Wagner Foundation in Stockholm, by whose generous grant the field work of this study was carried out, and next to Professor C. Lévi-Strauss, who has consistently encouraged me to complete this manuscript and has very kindly given me this opportunity for publication. I am greatly indebted also to: Professor Fred Eggan, Professor Raymond Firth, Professor Meyer Fortes, Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, Dr. E. R. Leach, Dr. Audrey Richards, and Professor D. M. Schneider for much stimulating discussion and helpful comment on the theoretical problems of this study.

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economy. The chances of acquiring a piece of land nowadays are small, except to very successful men, and usually the size of the plot is only just enough to maintain one household. When the land is passed on to the next generation, the youngest daughter will hold the title to it. This last tends to exclude married elder sisters from the right to use the land, since it is not sufficient for more than one household. Thus the ultimogeniture succession rule seems to have developed more sharply and to have encouraged limited inheritance in conjunction with the shortage of land.

This tendency creates unbalance in the economy of the households within a community. It is a usual picture in Khasi villages, for the biggest and well-built houses to be occupied by the youngest daughter's family, while the elder sisters reside in poor huts. Youngest daughters are usually landowners, while their elder sisters have often to become day-labourers after their marriage, unless their husbands are capable men, or their in-laws wealthy enough to give them some share of their acquired property. On the whole, the variations at present between rich and poor are considerable in a Khasi community, in comparison with that of the Garo, where the economic condition of each household in a village is more or less similar. These differences are not only a matter of economic organization but arise from the nature of each social structure.

The economic and social patterns of Sohkynduh and Kongton are very similar, but their dialects are slightly different; my interpreter, who came from Cherrapunjee, could work quite well at Sohkynduh, but at Kongton he found some difficulty, especially with the speech of the old men, and with their religious expressions. The head man of Kongton, who was quite accustomed to the Cherra dialect, acted as an interpreter for us. Such differences in dialect in the Khasi Hills are common phenomena, it is said that every valley has its own dialect. Differences are found not only in speaking, but also, to a certain extent, in culture and in social usages.

II. Village Endogamy

One of the outstanding features of Khasi social organization is the predominant tendency of endogamy on the level of the village, which contrasts with the structural orientation of the Garo village exogamy. This is closely connected with the distributions of clans and the nature of the descent groups.

The Khasi population consists of a number of *kur*, matrilineal clans, whose members consider themselves to be descended from a common ancestress. The members of the same *kur* have a common